

ARCHIVES



AUBADE



ARCHIVES

1981

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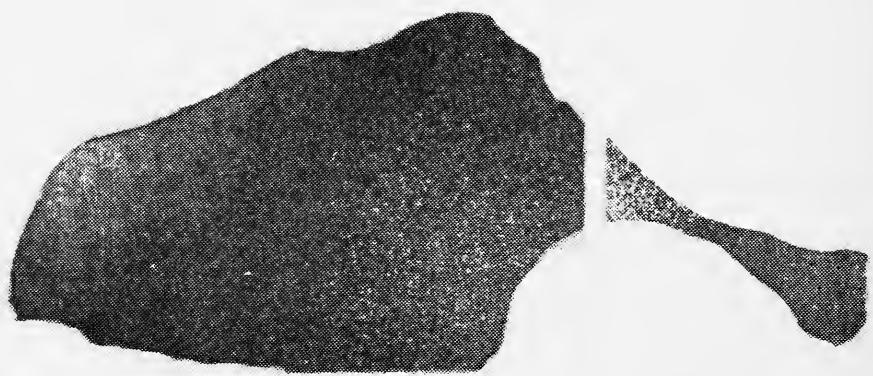
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Art Editor:	Julie M. Saracco
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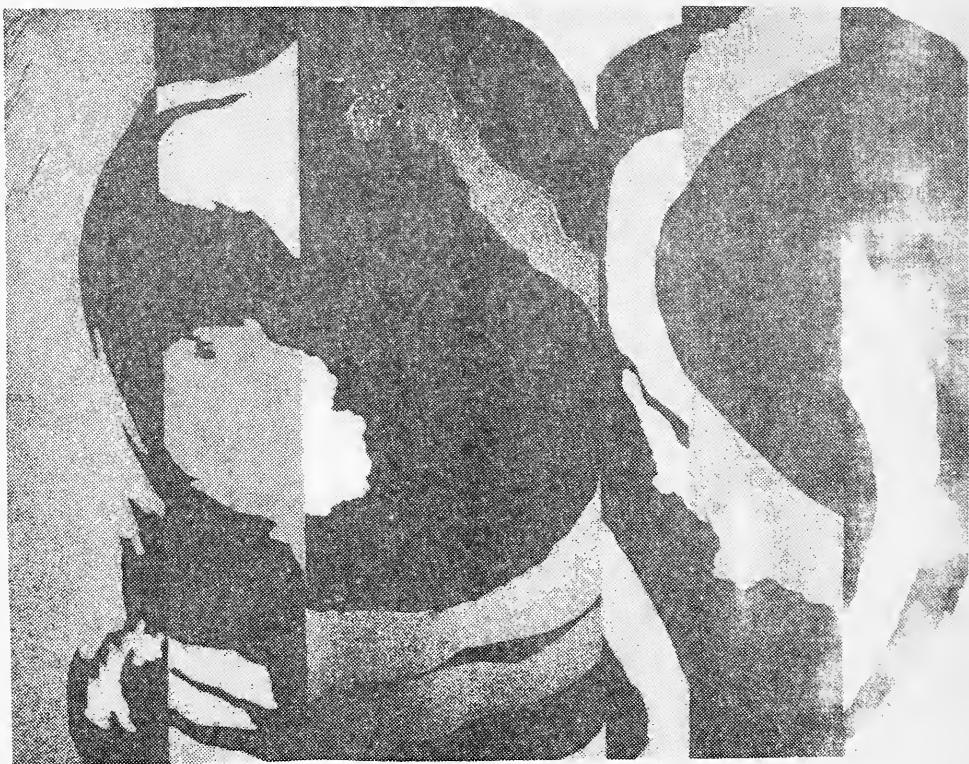
Debbie Snow

No more the ancient sages teach
on courtyard lawns
beneath the trees
Whilst pensive youths thirst to drink,
to quench this need,
to know, to think.

If I'd been there
I'd make him mine
That Plato with
that awesome mind.
I'd flaunt my sense
and then undress
My thoughts

Water, earth, a book, a woman.

Tamara Hamric



Kathy Leigh Hobbs

ACCOMPANIMENT: MAD TINKLING OF TINY BELLS

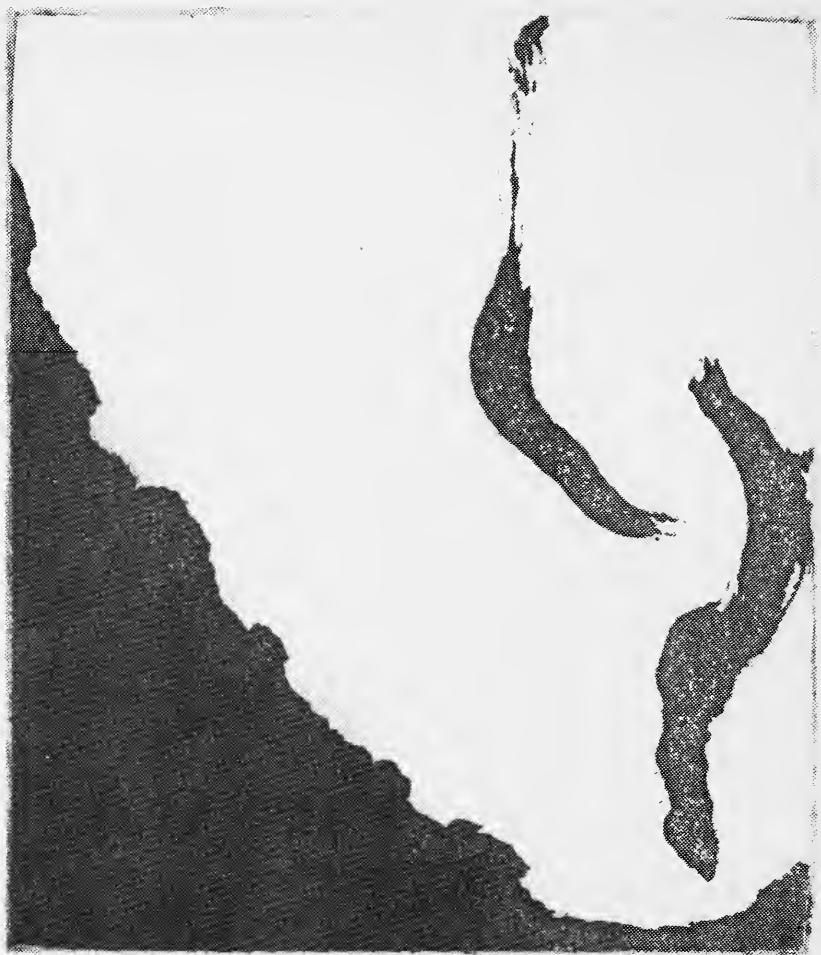
You tried to drown
the Littlest Angel.

But the dregs of bitter nights
were her ancient drink.
Her inexorable finger points
to the top of the stairs where
Sandalwood, leaves, pale lace, even salt
are exotic and fine.

The hot pillow you wept into
was made of the tips of her wings,
And that night you knelt
working eyelets over your veins
with the broken crystal stem,
It was she who slowed, then clotted
the rushing of your blood.

You clutched her coiled line;
She said, “Spring!”
and you did.
and you were.

Carol Swain



Julie Saracco

AT CARROT TIME

for Sister Jean Ann

This is a near vigil,
the smallness of the quick
rhythmic clicking of the silver
peeler as it pulls back orange
sheaths, within a hollow kitchen.
There is only violence in teeth
chewing towards the yellow
inside of the vegetable.
Cold steel closes in on skin.

The noise is reminiscent of your scuttle, Sister,
as you moved to early morning prayer
in low-heeled shoes. The feet brought me to this,
you thought as you dropped matin eyelids
upon the monkeypod crucifix.
Cold steel closes in on skin.

Something oozes here.
Beneath a two-pronged fork,
a beet onto carrot bleeds,
and I know how it goes with the heart.
I remember standing in the school cafeteria once,
washing dishes after letting go the peeler.
Having been initiated that day
into the native ways, it felt
like baptism, it gushed.

I can see your eyes following the wine, Sister,
into the depths of chalice still.
They are bright with the liquid.
It follows you like the red flecks
that the Yapese girls made on passageways:
spittle and chewed beetle-nut
indicated that they had been there through their teeth.

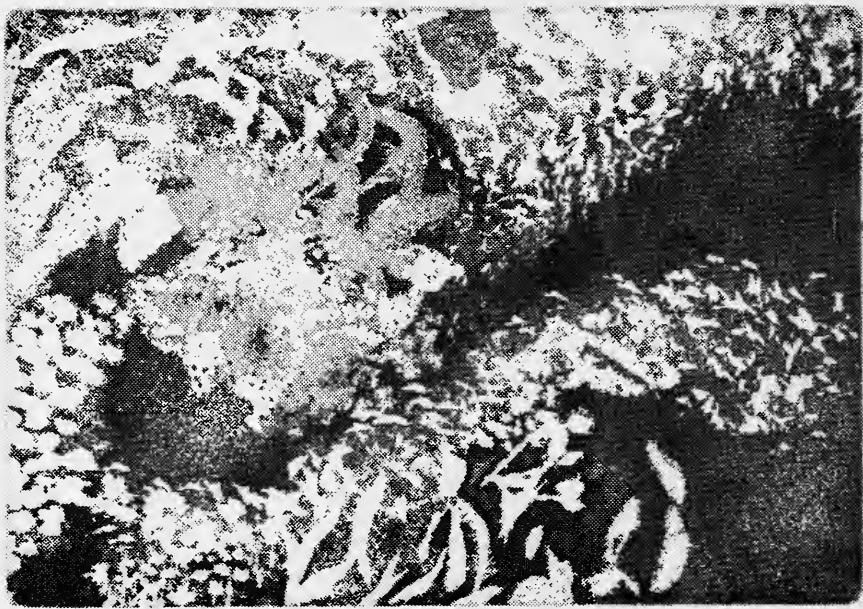
Teeth flash, cold still.
Steel on wriggling carrot finds blight.
Not thrown away, I imagine that the disease may grow,
much like this obsession that you have
started within my pen -
another instrument with which to strip away,
reach inside.
I want you to know, Sister, that,
in this one small way, I have not departed from your customs.
They have taken root.
My feet feel gnarled underneath this soil-type weight,
they must pause in celebration.

Stripped and diminutive, inside my hand,
rests the yellow center meat,
while the remainder of the vegetable lays
in shards among chopped cabbage.
I take it into my mouth as communion, still
clutching cold steel.

Meredith Pierce



Wilhelmina Long

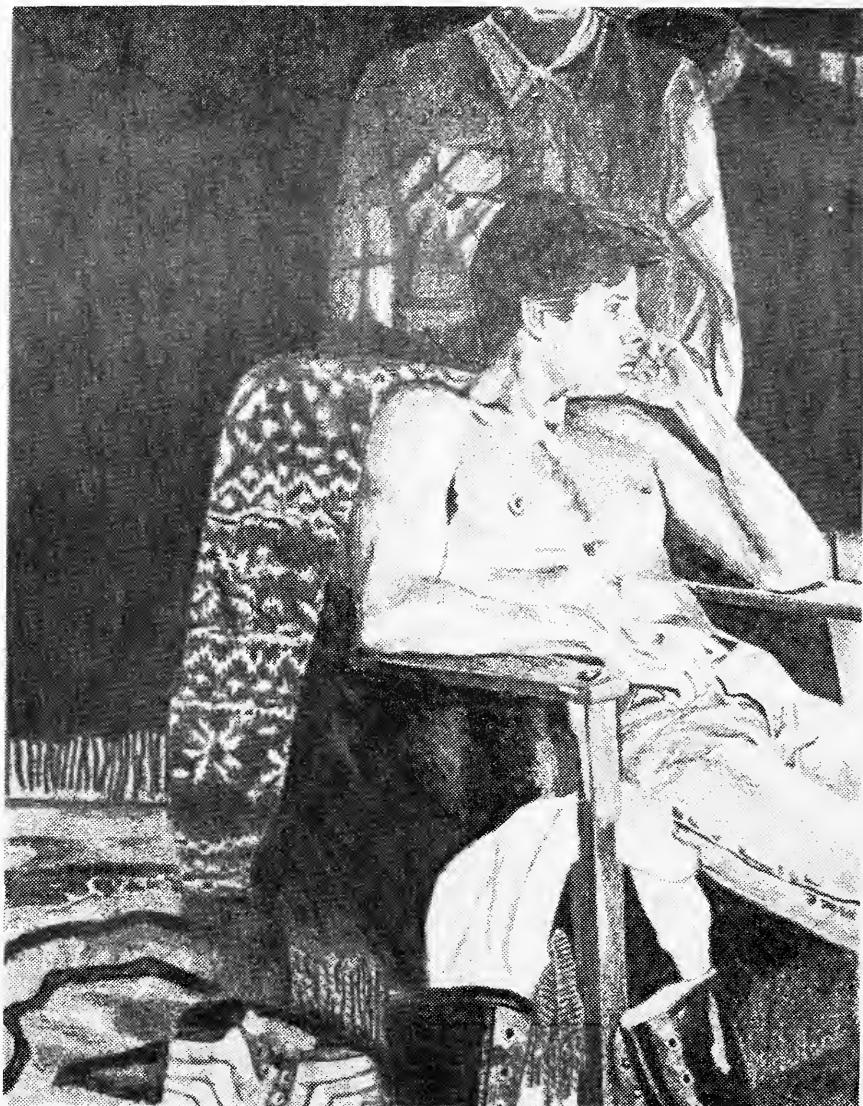


Wendy Wolf Hall

WARM BUD AND DRIED ROSES

Warm Bud on the window sill
Dried roses in colored vases
With “That one did so nicely”
And “This one never really bloomed”
I write poems for worn threads
And he writes a poem of summer’s end
And someone’s hands.
Unsung but not unloved
The oil lamp needs filling again
And the kitten’s paws are cold
From standing on chilly kitchen tiles
Time to buy birdseed and plastic glass.
“It’s coming on Christmas . . .”
They’re cuttin down trees . . .”
“Must you play that song again?”
Second cousin to John Prine,
I don’t know so
But even if I thought so
“Your tea is getting cold”
Storm windows and Souvenirs
And the deep scent of Poplar
Buried like a seed in his shirt pocket
Makes me think of rosemary and hot soup,
Melted cheese on bakery bread
And long December evenings.
Gentle stranger
Gather warmth around my shoulders
Like a great, black shawl and
Dance with me,
Dance with me,
Dance with me.

Libby Palmer



Carl Green

LETTER TO A DEAF MUTE

for George Mosby Jr.

Joseph,

Today is your sixteenth birthday,
the anniversary of your voiceless, uncertain
blooming. The day you hung upside down from
the hands of a doctor, like St. Peter before
his death, had the locks and shackles invisibly
secured to your ears, as you were slapped into
this harsh reality. We both know this. How
our eyes have spoken many times: mine saying,
I'm sorry. You returning brightly, *it's all*
right, all right.

Enough of this.

Let us talk of birthdays, happy birthdays:
candles twitching, the rustle of wrapping paper,
empty boxes stacked neatly in a corner. Your
mother and I have sent presents, surely. We
hope you like them, can share them with friends
at school. But what of presents? They seem
so vulgar, distant, and unfulfilling. They
carry no certainty of value; no assurance of
easy redemption, should they be broken. We
have no confidence in presents Joseph, only
in you, our carpenter of humility. Sometimes,
presents should never be given.

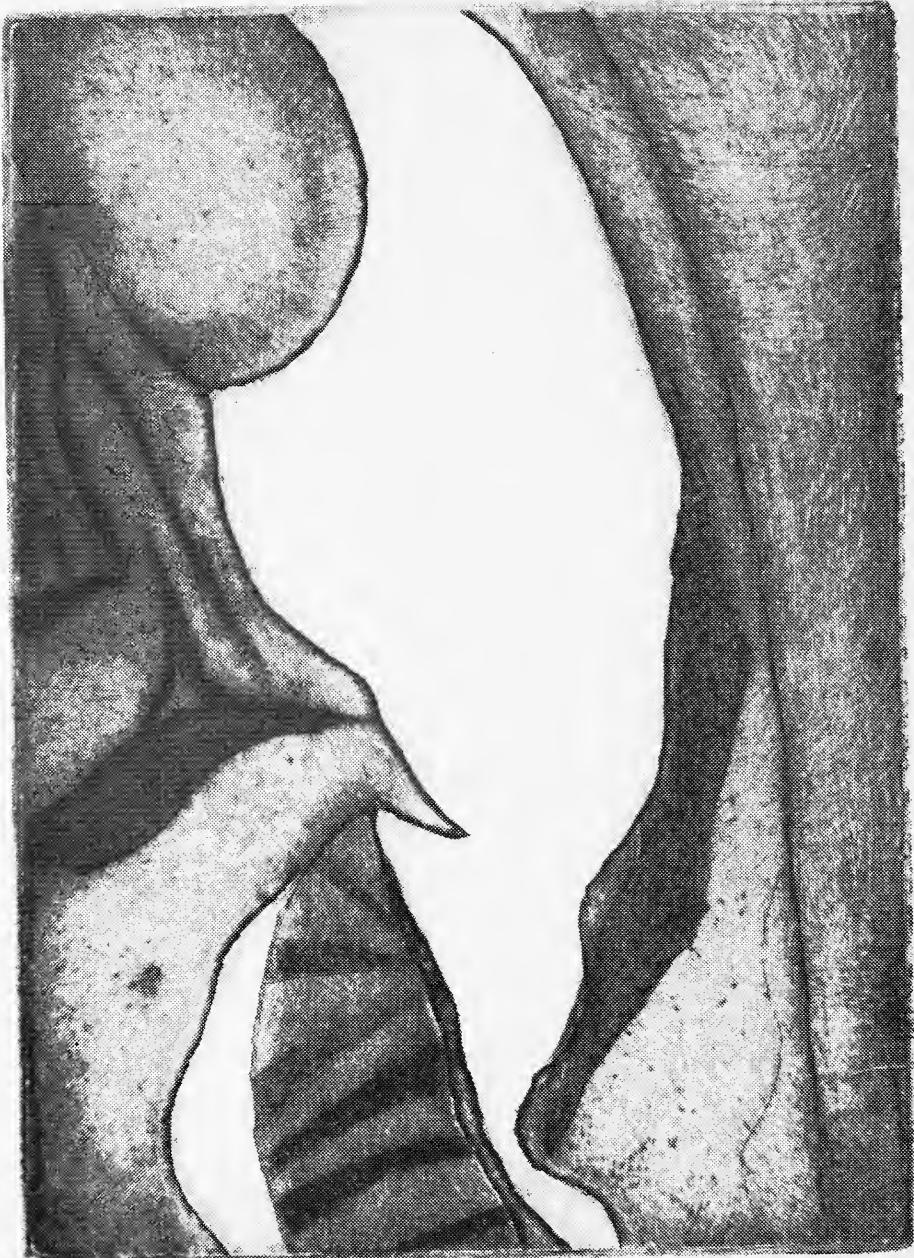
If we could, we would give you our voices,
to lock in some awkward chamber of your ear,
to constantly whisper our love and good wishes.
You have seen this happen before. Think: the
way cool water at Lake Accotink held the reeds
tightly, as if protecting a secret. How the wind
crept through, discovered the words, and sang
them to birch trees along the shore. How the
trees answered, *yes, yes*, swaying back and forth,
as if nodding.

Your mother, Joseph, holds you tightly in
her memory as she sits on the porch, overlooking
the lake from her wicker chair, the chair you made.
Her right leg swings with a soft doubt, but a
stronger hopefulness. She hears your voice
calling from the reeds.

Mark Madigan



Paul C. Muick



Tammy Reid

Violet bands stretch across the sky...

and a cool August breeze
wafts through moist cottons.

Tanned bodies — all legs
toss a ball

between intermittent shouts of youth.

And a sprinkler whishes
over futile brown patches.

My neighbors have clustered
to their front stoops

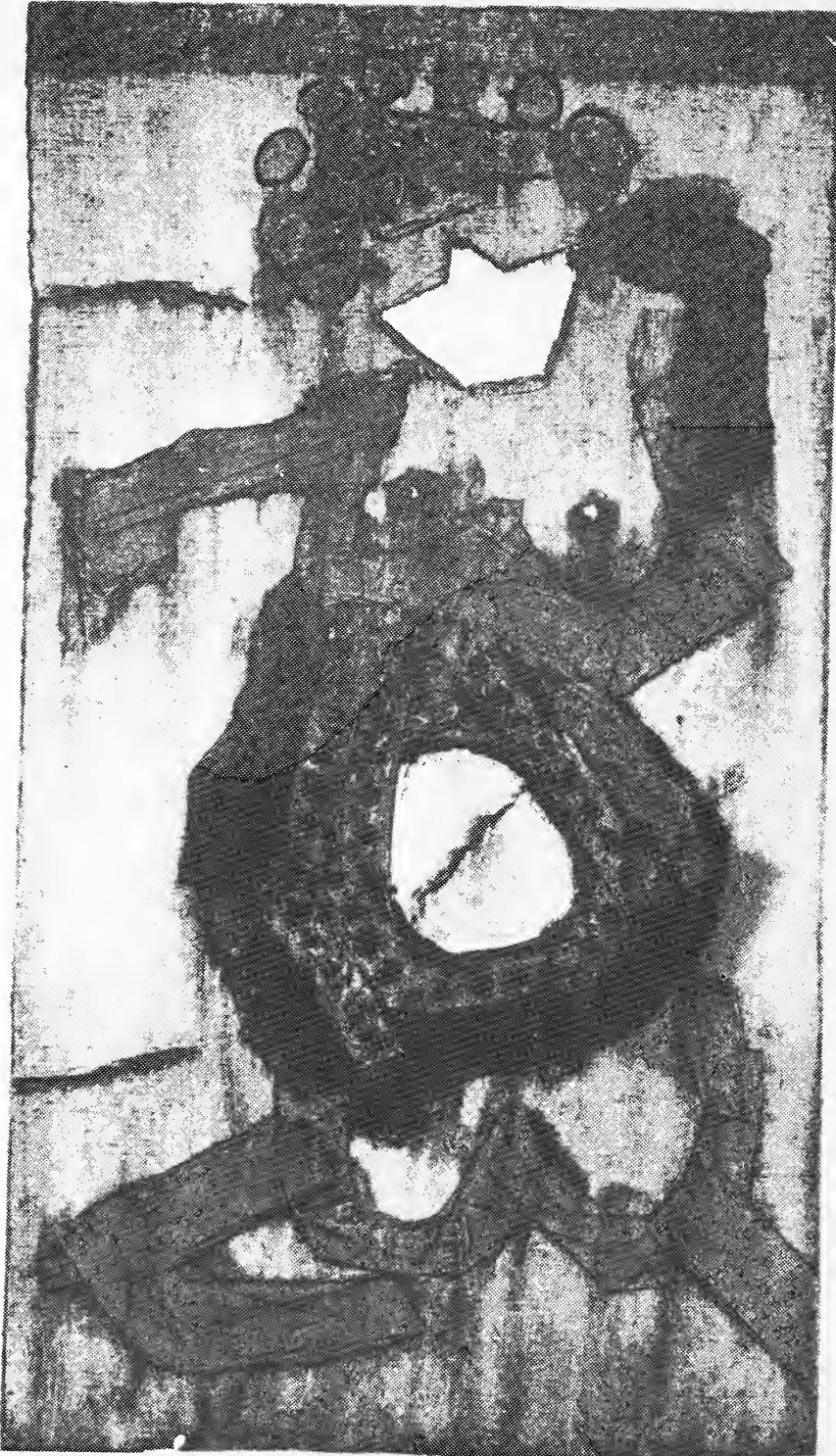
in escape of suburban heat.

And I, in my porch swing, sigh.

Summer slides down my throat,

a mint julep.

Martha De Silva



Faith Strong

You need the bitter coffee
and aspirin,
to keep you going now
and perhaps a night of
of dreamless sleep
or an arm around you,
anyone's.

Your socks are
scattered on the floor
and scrawled papers.
Julie called yesterday
from Boston
said she'd come down
sometime soon
and did you hear
that Maggie lost her baby?
Her voice so hollow
and frameless
so like a winter-bare tree
if you're alive
it doesn't show

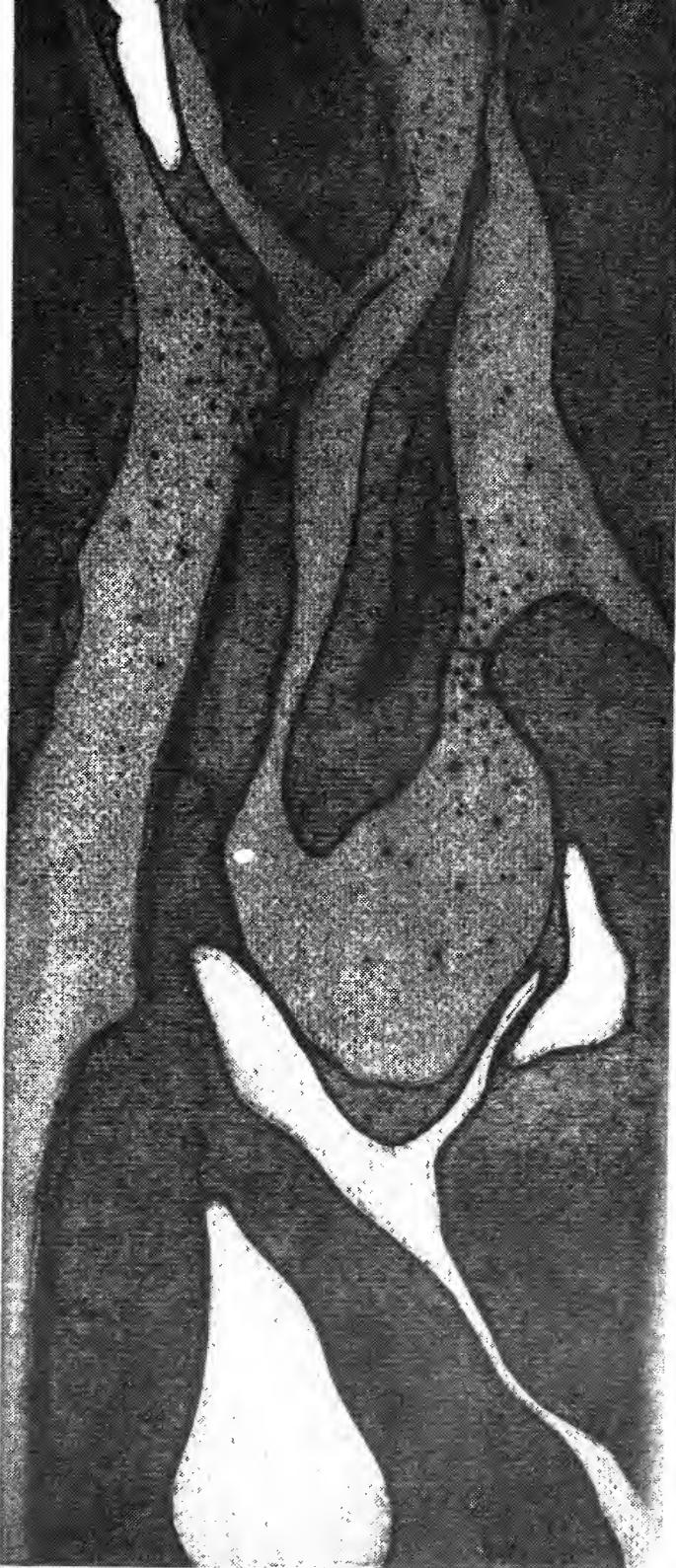
So you sit
drink warm coke
conceive and abort a poem
turn out all the lights
lay on the bed
fully clothed.

All your life
you thought someone
would save you
someone would tell you
you were better
than all the rest.

*A waitress at
a midnight cafe
once said:
Honey, I don't think
they make white horses
anymore, and, if they did
there's no one to ride 'em.
And she laughed.
And you sipped your sharp coffee.*

You are at a point
in your life
where hands never touch
eyes don't meet
and everything is transparent
and utterly ordinary.
and somehow there's no need
to dust, pick up socks,
dial the phone.
It's clutter
all of it
clutter.

Lisa Dittrich



Kathy Leigh Hobbs



Roberta Black Mason

amuck

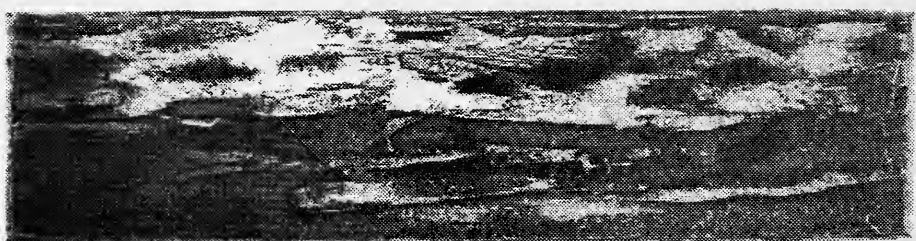
ah, where's the relief?
the cooled sand at nightfull
of deadthings
abandoned by the foam
casting sharp edges
w/the early spears of sun.

words splash over me, wings
of birds
dashing about
behind darkness
of dust and gull.

empty islands, we choke on the sky dreaming
of origin
students
mispell
G-O-D
of no exits.

it might be relief to wake
and find my skin
gone
why can't I have rain
for a body
and strip
the shells from the shore?

C. France



Julie Saracco

Darkling clouds
absent the moon
as I,
 on my back,
separate tufts of grass
 from the soil.
You said a person
 only has one heart,
so give it to your work.
I did, daddy,
 but the work hasn't given love back.
The night smothers,
yet only dry tears
 can it wrench
from me.
 Words and verse
thrust their prickled spears
 into my brain.
Too tired to fight them off
 one succumbs,
for only on paper
 do I feel.

Diana A. Wolotkiewicz



Roberta Black Mason

THE EYES OF NERJA: EIGHT PORTRAITS OF SPAIN

1.

Dawn:

The cats are pacing
the black sand beach.
Like lovers waiting,
they are hungry, expectant.
Fishermen cry, *Mira*,
their colored crafts coming
from the long of dark night
and the deepness of work.

2.

There was a British woman in the lobby there,
in Nerja. A dwarf with a huge leather bag,
well-worn sandals of the same, a bright green
vest, a cedar/gold/and ivory cane for short,
bent legs.

She stepped into a toddler's stroller, blue
and white striped, and was wheeled off to the seaside by a friend,
to paint. Her artist's warp was of body, here in Goya's
blood spattered country, which made the difference,
besides her being foreign. Her painting was
crystal, linear, devastatingly honest.

People speaking Spanish on the boardwalk wanted
to ask her how.

3.

I hear the chatter of Germans
along these quiet streets.
The Spaniards glide,
silent in brown and black
heavy in heavy cloth.
La Touristas hurry,
vexing in prints and stripes,
money lights up eyes full
of nothing that can comprehend
this red country.

4.

A man passes. He has
a bright orange patch
across one eye, hung on
a crooked ear, which makes him
look darker somehow, in
the deep of one brown eye
remaining.

It is flat, glitterless.

5.

Out of the lobby, I begin to notice eyes.
Sunken eyes, protruding eyes, thick brows,
solid, proud, honest, Spanish, red eyes.
Aie! I know why they accepted the dwarf woman.
She seemed to fit in with the idea of the old man
with the bent back, in the gray wool shirt, made
of coarse hair, near horse hair underneath his load
of olive wood. Along the road, above the Mediterranean,
in this Espana, *en esta Espana*, he could not join the boated men.
Yet, while not joining them, he ruled them, unseen, from the red,
red, road, collecting sticks among the rocks there,
above them.

6.

It is said that an old woman
inhabits the broken tower.
Out on the lonely point,
surrounded by blue and salt smell,
perhaps she watches from there
as the fish are brought in,
despite the cats that she has
learned to loathe as she must
fight them for her food.
She bats them with charred olive
sticks at early morning, like
something wild. Again I think of Goya.
So it is said.

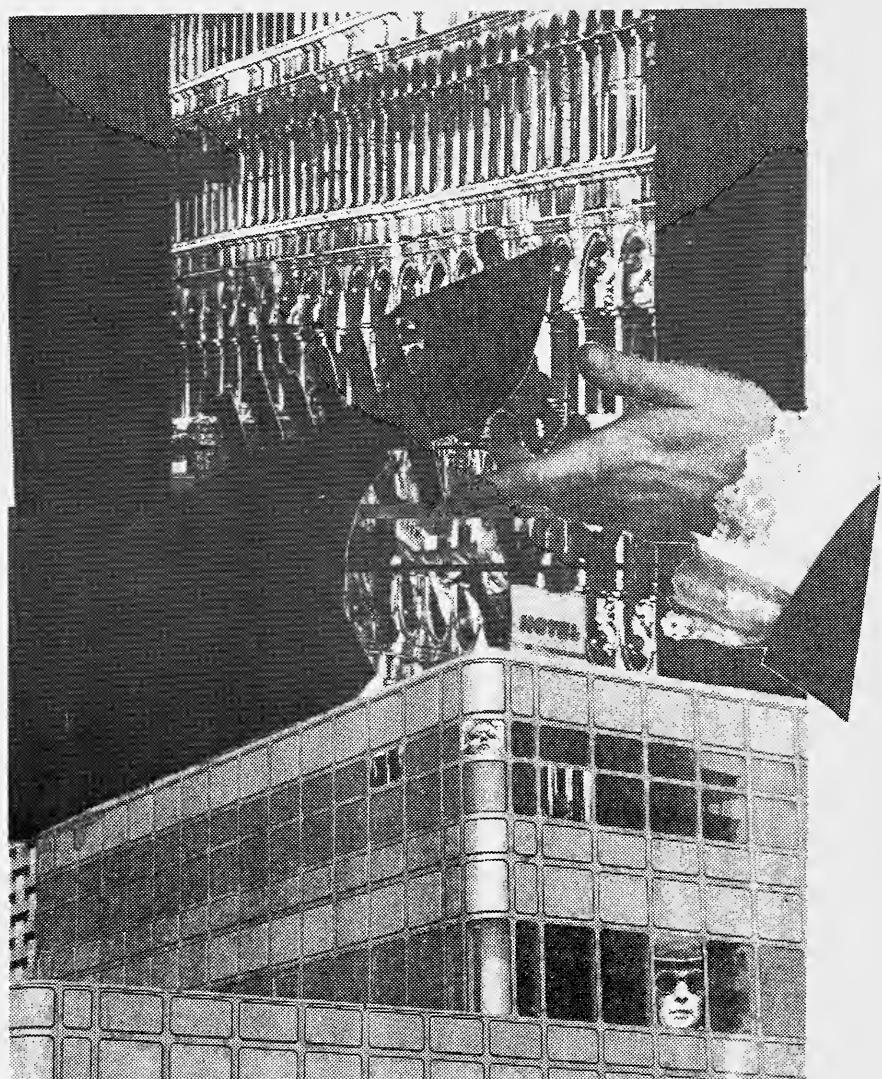
7.

We have left Nerja now.
It is late afternoon towards Alamaneca.
My mother sits in the front, red seat.
In this rented car, along the road to Granada,
her glasses make mirrors of her face.
She cries at every turn, "Look, look!"
Mira, mira—mirrors make me shudder these days.
They remind me much of fish eyes, as they
twist back into themselves upon capture.
I too flex at this moment, wanting
to understand this red country in
its olive sticks, canes, bent legs, bent backs,
rocks, colored crafts, fish, eyes, cats, black
beach, in its deepness of work.

8.

Midnight:
An empty-eyed cat, black,
paces the open sewered street.
She is hungry, she is waiting,
as Granada awakens.
They say she was a flamenco dancer,
before this deepness of work,
She has let go her colored craft.

Meredith Pierce



Julie Saracco

The crumbs from your table
Are the grains of sand,
The tiny irritants
I take into myself,
And turn into pearls.

Connie Smith

MAN'S BRAVE GLIMPSE OF THE SUBLIME

Men with whiskers
dipped in wine
Waltz through the wreckage
of heavy gray questions
with deep-lidded eyes

Once these heroes
knelt in the doorways at home
Cursing their parents
and praising the blinds
timidly drawn on their turbulent minds

The struggle is over—

No one acknowledges
fresh melted morning's
moronic disguise

Melene Gedickian



Donna Chapman Grasso

A HALF

She sleeps like a hollow tree with still roots in the chilled earth.
Around her bed teddy bears and a playful white seal dance while the last moth flickers too close to a candles' warmth.
Away down the highway worn boots scrape past a single gold leaf, and a stone taps slowly down the blacktop.
His hunched shoulders turn away from headlights to wait for a fresh darkness.

Days to the north geese cross a waning moon.
When he walks alone, brushing naked branches, she will wait for the geese to fly from their short stay on her deep green pond.

As hot chocolate, roasted chestnuts, and a wood stove warm her the first wet snow falls.
In the morning light he closes his eyes to hold somebody very tight, then goes to throw hay to a yearling steer.

He doesn't hang pictures of ballet dancers on his walls anymore.
She watches as a spider web still dangles from a toy top on her nick-nack shelf.

Roger Prine.



Paula Rose

PUTNAM'S HANDS

Hands like old souls—
Lattice fingers wrapped loosely
Round idle wrists,
Gentle ringlets dangling kindly
In broken lines
Over fading flesh.

Uncuffed behind useless quills
A red hawk's tail feather
Dipped in a long-since well,
Scratched inkless furrows
Into now scattered parchment
Of a once unclouded brow.

Putnam passes the back of his soul
Over lazy, hazel eyes
And dusty cobwebs in the corners,
Of chalk white ripples
From skipping flat, pumice stones
Could not rub away in pommel palms.

Outside the wintery ledge
Ghostly dogwood, breathless night,
Orion's libido twinkling
Above frosty meadows and fallen fences,
Naked limbs of knotty pines
Traced blue against the upstairs light.

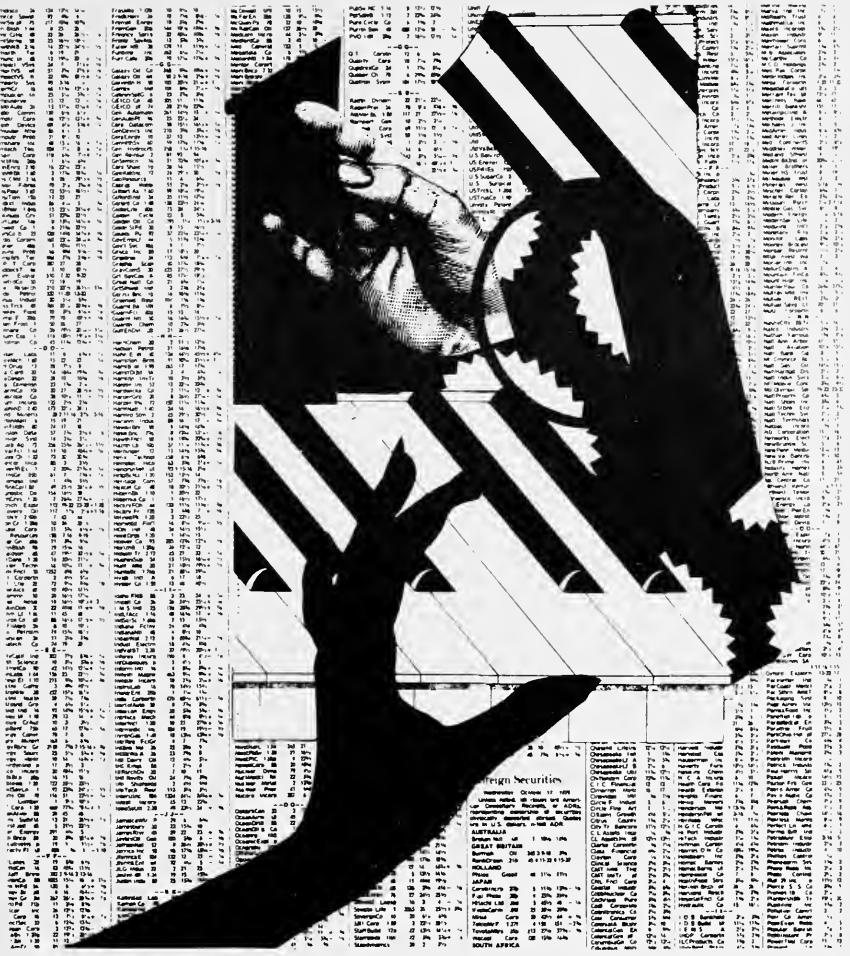
A gray and frayed curtain edge
Like the collars of his shirts
Brushes past Putnam's forearm
Barely touching scarce, snowy hairs,
And startles his sleepy heart to wake—
And dream.

Of warm spring sands
Pressed between unsodden toes,
Of white gulls cutting gray clouds
When it was afternoon all morning
And her petticoats teased him
Ankle deep in the ocean's ebb.

She collected driftwood and tiny shells
Gathered in her grandmother's apron
And tied back tangled hair
Off a pure, unclouded brow,
She shattered waves with her motion
Then pushed them back with slender fingers.

The willows bare arms stir without a sound
Not the rustle they would have made in spring,
And a broken butterfly shell
That had lit on his window sill
For so many years ago—
Floats away.

Libby Palmer



Julie Saracco



Faith Strong

cenacolo

oldness is a fright of time
very very

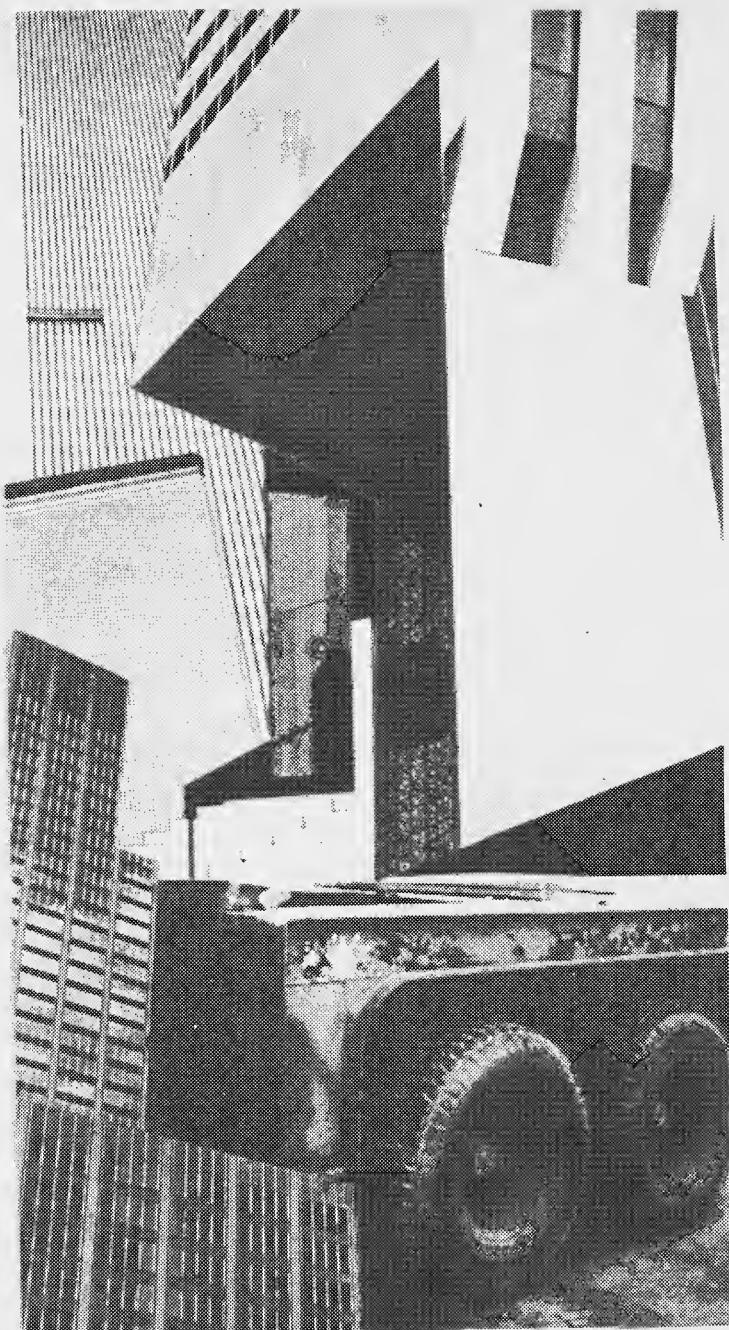
still

where laudenum and pleated aches
(what seek surface)
withdrawl

And so she was, the lady of the cave,
a "Madonna on the Rocks" w/a twist.
for better or worse, the meals provided
a hostess w/a clause in her contract
(what fine print, my dear)
means, minute letters, iota of words, ad infinitum . . .
we commune w/the wine
and the parks of thoreau, (the tree
looks lovely, over there please)
the table smirks fine porcelain and silver
gorged chalices bleed by candlelight
invited, we enter the cenacolo, tomorrow
a feast of the tree

* the room where the Last Supper took place

C. France



Julie Saracco

CITY

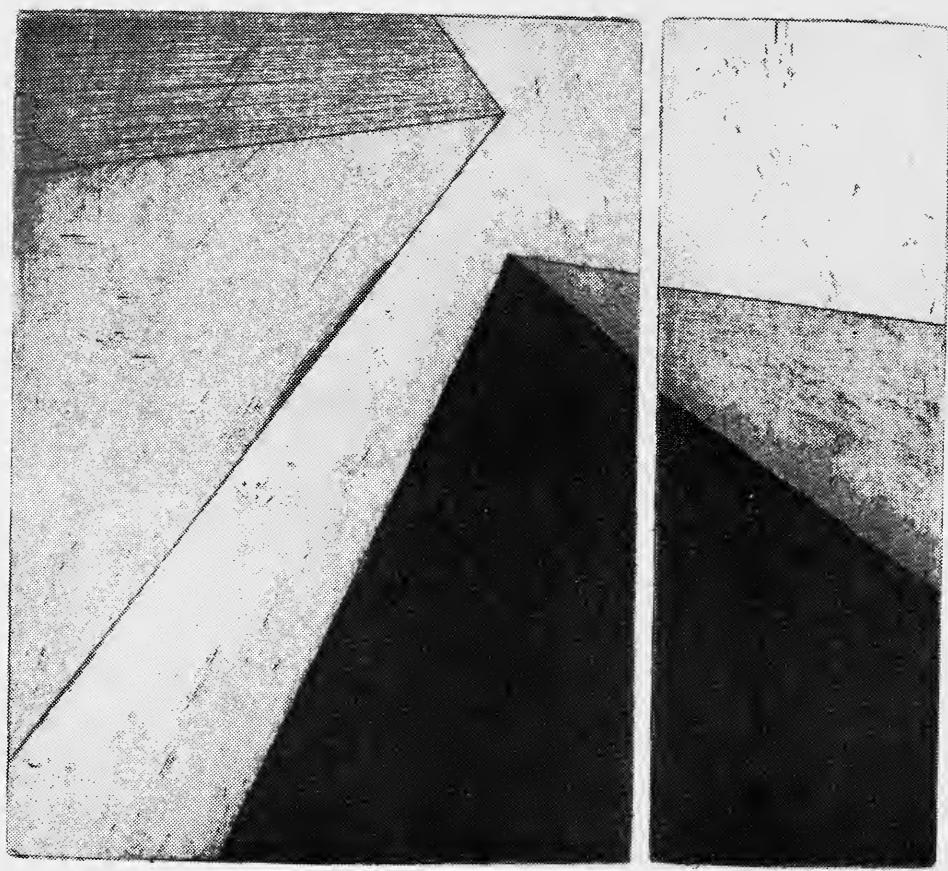
In purple night
Tugboat lights wink
As the burnt umbras river
Swifts coal barges through
Corridors of red brick.

Susan Eiche

A FAREWELL SONG

Today I sat in the sky
At the end of day
When the clouds are lavender
And I held you
Singing you this song
While you were being pulled away
By a nameless north bound train.

Dale E. Williams



Kathy Grabeel

slim
inconsequential
smile
undernourished
by events
stretching,
receding,
tongue
tide
on ineffable
shores . . .
worm-words
dangling
from
lips

Melene Gedickian

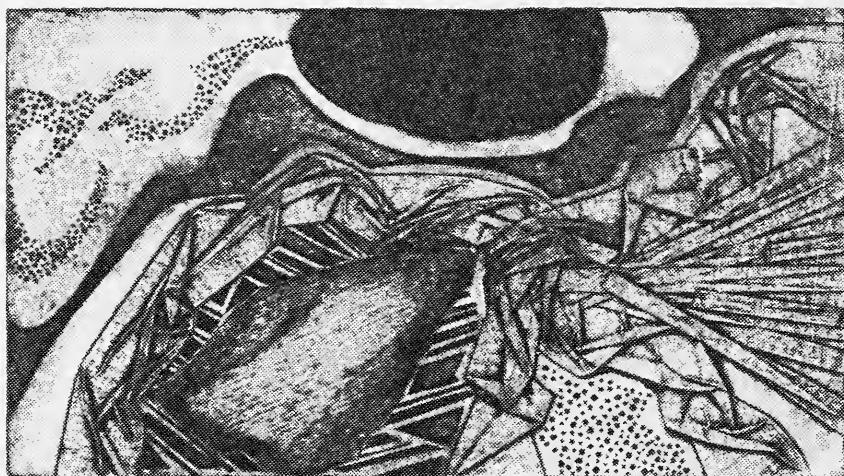
THE EGYPTIANS

Far away, long ago,
Seed husks gently flew with the wind.
The Egyptian farmer guides his ox around the circular path
knowing the ox will loosen the grain from its worthless coating.

The Jewish slaves have left,
left this man to tend his own fields
to reap what he may.

They left with the wind as the husk leaves a seed,
and the husk blew east.

Charles Rodriguez



Wendy Wolf Hall

Leafing through the mud-cool forest,
Flapping mane a feathered fire,
Sun's leopard rhythms bridle birchwood,
Cords that fuel the stallion's ire.

Cadenced swaying of the haunches,
Chestnut rivers ripple on,
Pathways sounded by the hoof-beats,
Ordered impulse births a song.

Susan Eiche

HAIKU

Crut on plastic guns
Deadwood rots in dense gray fog
A webbing spider

Roger Prine



Julie Saracco

SNAPSHOTS

1.

In this picture
we are standing side by side
both of us drunk, and wearing dark glasses.
We have just met. You are on my right.
The face of a rock and roll singer
is pasted across my chest like a flag.
He looks out at the camera.
My left arm reaches across his face,
covering one of his eyes, as I attempt
to pass you a beer. The singer is caught
in this position like a helpless referee,
unable to restrict a series
of illegal, but inevitable, plays.
Your hand is raised to meet mine
on the rim of an aluminum can;
we fumble in our drunkenness.
The referee watches, but says nothing.
The expression on your face
reads like a football play:
you are a lofty tailback,
I am a defensive tackle.
The referee considers a call
for illegal motions, having read
the lines running across your face.
But considering the size and shape
and the anger of drunken players,
he finds he has no penalty flags at all.

2.

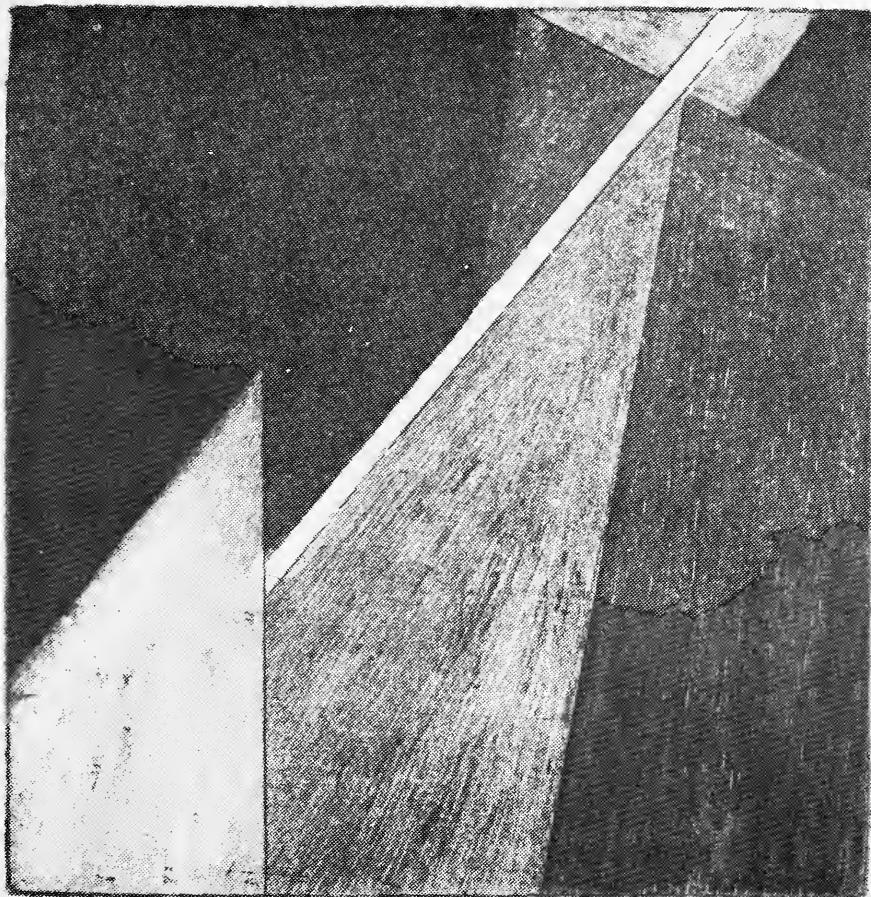
You are alone here, wearing a red
polka dot scarf and a black football jersey.
Number 70. The number I wore, several
seasons ago. You are on one knee, the left,
leaning forward to paint the bottom board
of a wooden fence—a job I left undone
two short summers ago.

Brown paint chips lie in the grass like confetti.
The camera has caught you
with your backside exposed
a trait, you said, unhealthy
for those interested in football.

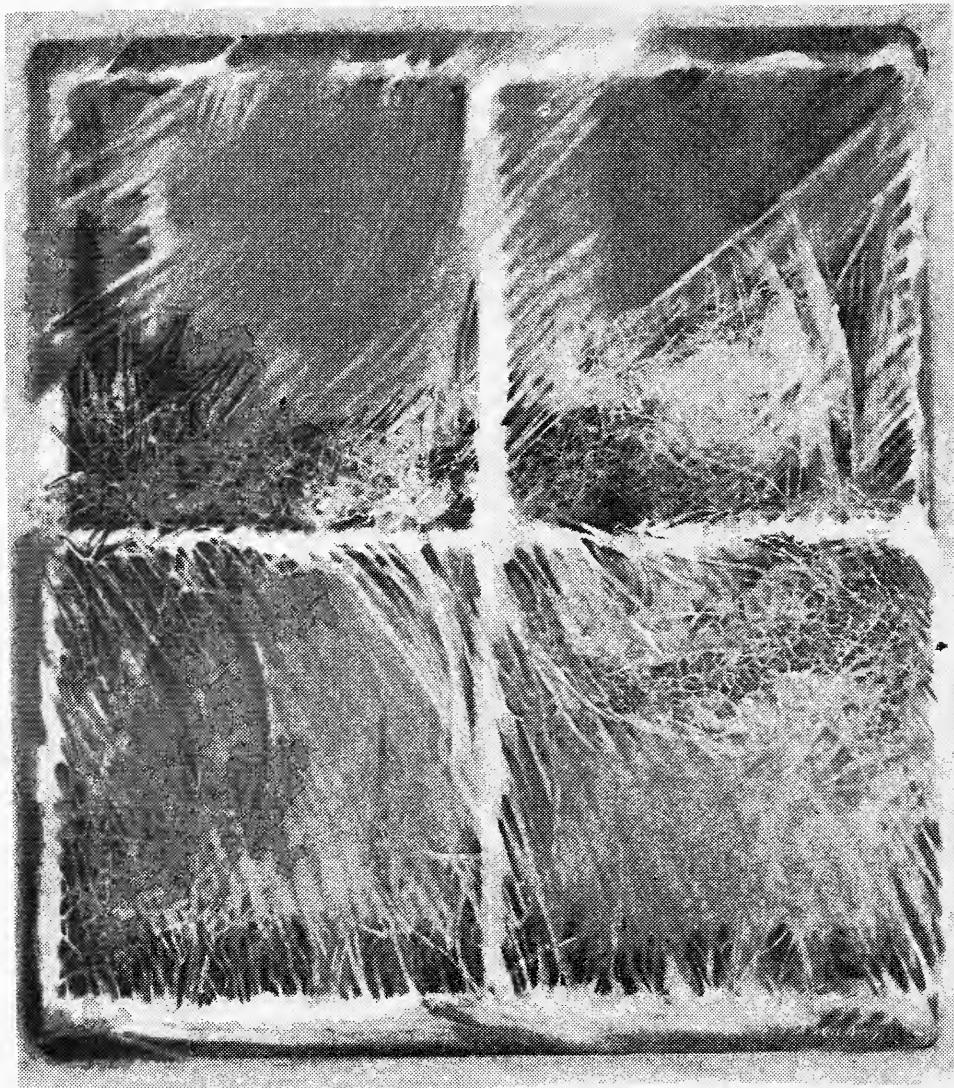
3.

You who were never interested in politics
are captured here at a high school fundraiser.
Money is needed to buy new uniforms
for the football team. Dressed in a sleek
black evening gown, you hold a banner that screams:
“Go!, Go Cardinals!” Where are you headed,
I might ask? You are escorted by a friend,
a lawyer. His glasses have slipped
to the edge of his nose. He looks at you
like a jeweler inspecting a diamond.
Both of you drink Scotch, holding glasses
bearing the high school seal,
and a motto disguised by Latin.
I recall a similar party
almost a decade ago, when your face
did not read of political lines.
Looking into this picture,
I am forced to watch myself
removed from a football game
while a more forceful player
is sent in to play.
In this game, I am the referee.

Mark Madigan



Kathy Grabeel



Joseph Di Bella

I swallowed
piece by jagged year
all the shattered glass poured
like wine slicing down
my silenced throat
I am filled
with all the points
bristling redundantly like
stalagmites in the promised dark
and I wince when I am touched

Carol Swain

The Sun
slipping and sliding
down the curve of the sky
like an egg yolk
dropping into a cup of earth.

Resa Cirrincione



Julie Saracco

If patiently you await
the celestial evening light
that glitters
like a diamond-studded brooch
on the broad bosom of a woman
in an ink-black dress,
surely the Sun's rays
will stab out your eyes
with bronze arrowheads
and you will not see Day
or Night again.

If you await the Birdsong
the early-morning choir
whose master allows
all manner of song and keys together,
a capella,
surely Nature,
the heavenly Seamstress,
will thrust a Golden Needle
through your eardrums
and you will not hear cardinal
or crow again.

If you seek the feel of Water,
the cool crystal fluid fingers
flowing like liquid quartz
in your hand,
then surely Fire
will course electric through your grey nerves
and they will turn form taut silver wire
to limp white string,
and you will not feel Water
or coolness again.

If it is sweetness you desire,
the sharp bliss of sugar
on your tongue
which leaves a bitter edge behind,
then surely you shall sever
your own tongue
with a silver blade
and taste neither Sweetness
nor Bitterness again.

All these
will be taken
if you so desire them
But
if you desire to Speak
it shall be so.

Lisa Dittrich



John Lamph



